

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly newscast

June 20th, 2014

Lessons prepared by Amie Sondheim & Justine Light

Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as, an ESL classroom resource



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<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News story #1 Flood Watch

What is a flood? What would you do if your city started flooding? This first story is about the increasing amount of water around parts of Alberta and the threat of another flood.

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Choose the group of synonyms (words with similar meaning) that best match each of the vocabulary words. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Words in the story	Related words
	flood	a) boss leader
	watch	b) growing increasing
	rising	c) large quantity lots of water
	certainly	d) harm destruction
	forced	e) for sure definitely
	chief	f) mandatory have to
	affected	g) guard attention
	damage	h) touched concerned

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

water levels – refers to how high or low the water in a river or lake is

reserve - land set aside by the federal government for the First Nations people

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **true (T)** or **false (F)**. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ All of Alberta is on flood watch.
2. ____ Water levels might rise in the Crowsnest Pass area and Medicine Hat.
3. ____ The water levels are the highest on the Blood Reserve.
4. ____ More than a hundred people have been forced from their homes.
5. ____ There is damage already caused by the rising water levels.
6. ____ This is the worst flooding that's been seen in the area.

Discussion: How can people prepare for floods? What big floods have you heard about?

News story #2 Building a Tunnel

How do people prevent certain areas from flooding? If the place you live got flooded tomorrow, what would you do? And, where would you go? This second story is about Calgary's plan to build a tunnel to help prevent another flood disaster.

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily

Vocabulary: Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Word	Definition
city council committee (noun)	A group of people that govern (make decisions for) a city
back (verb)	To show support for something
divert (verb)	To cause something to change paths or directions
tunnel (noun)	A man-made, underground pathway, often built under hills and roads or, through mountains and buildings
protect (verb)	To keep safe
mitigation (noun)	The action of reducing the seriousness of a certain problem
excess (adjective)	Having more than the wanted amount of something; extra

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

head of the panel – the person in charge of the mitigation panel

reservoir – a place that stores extra water

1. Go through the _____ and then turn left once you're out of it and you will find the lake.
2. Just put any _____ food left over from the picnic in the kitchen.
3. The _____ has to decide what the best plan of action is for Calgary.
4. They _____ the proposal to build a new tunnel under the road.
5. The council wants to _____ the city from experiencing another flood this spring.
6. The focus is on the _____ of any more damage from having another flood.
7. We can _____ the water and send it away from the city, instead of through the city.

Now listen to the first news story from the audio file.

Listening activity: Inferring meaning

Answer the question according to what is implied in the audio. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. What is the idea that is being put forward for city council to consider?
2. If there were a flood, where would it likely occur?
3. Where would the tunnel begin?
4. Why is Wolf Keller commenting on the tunnel?
5. Why could building the tunnel end up saving more than 500 million dollars?
6. How would the tunnel work?

Discussion Question: In what ways can humans control Mother Nature? What do people do to change the natural world? Do people succeed in controlling nature?

News story #3 Massive Donation

What is a donation? Why do people donate money? This next story is about a 200 million dollar donation that was given to the University of Calgary Medical School.

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Words or phrases	Definition
	1. donation (n)	a) an important or official statement
	2. historic (adj)	b) a former student of a school or university
	3. announcement (n)	c) a gift of money or goods
	4. local (adj)	d) to make the same
	5. alumnus (n)	e) a sum or total of something added together
	6. match (v)	f) very important and will be recorded as part of history
	7. combined (adj)	g) referring to a certain area; it is nearby, not far away

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

Faculty of medicine – the area of the university that studies medicine

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Order of Events

Put these events in order by numbering them 1 (first event) to 6 (last event). *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ The Alberta government decided to match the donation of Cumming's.
2. ____ The University has changed the name of the faculty of medicine.
3. ____ Cummings told the university that he will donate 100 million dollars.
4. ____ David Hancock made an announcement about the government matching the donation.
5. ____ Hundreds of people were at the University for a historic announcement.
6. ____ Geoffrey Cummings decided to donate a lot of money to the University of Calgary.

Discussion

How do donations like this one, help universities with research? How important is medical research? Can you think of other places the province of Alberta could have used the \$100 million dollars, instead of donating it to the University of Calgary?

Language Focus: Using Simple Present Tense

Present tense – The news is often reported in simple present tense, instead of another verb tense. Look at the form of simple present using the example **Take**:

Pronoun	Verb
I	take
You	take
He/She/It	takes
We	take
They	take

The subject of a sentence is not always a pronoun, such as the ones listed above. If you are trying to decide if you should add an **-s** on a regular verb or not, it might be helpful to look at the subject and decide which pronoun would take its place.

Look at some samples from this week's stories. Identify the **present tense verb** and **the subject** that the present tense verb is associated with, or the **pronoun**. Then, re-write the sentence using a pronoun, or stating the subject. See below:

Story 1: The worst of **the flooding is** on the Blood Teserve,... - **It is** on the Blood Reserve...

Story 2: The city's flood **mitigation panel says** a tunnel below ... **It says** a tunnel below...

Story 3: **This combined gift of 200 million dollars... is** one of largest research gifts in Canadian history. – **It is** one of the largest research gifts in Canadian....

Exception to the -s rule: If a modal verb is used (could, should, would, might...), any verbs following the modal keep the base form.

Example: **Heritage Drive could divert** excess water from the Glenmore Reservoir.

- **It could divert** excess water....

Look at some other examples and identify the present tense verb and the subject that the verb is associated with. Then re-write the sentence using the pronoun instead of the specific subject, or, if the pronoun is given, re-write it with the full name of the pronoun:

1. Parts of Alberta are on flood watch.
2. Oscar Cotton is the fire chief for the Blood Tribe.
3. He says that nearly a hundred homes have been affected by the rising water.
4. Cotton says there is damage but it is certainly not the worst flooding that's been seen in the area.
5. The head of the panel, Wolf Keller, says the tunnel could cost up to 500-million dollars, but it could save more than that if there's another flood.

Transcripts of weekly news stories:

	JUNE 20 TH , WEEKLY NEWS STORIES	TIME
Introduction	Hi, I'm Rosa Marchitelli. You're listening to Learning English with CBC for the week of June 20 th .	0:00
Story 1	Parts of Alberta are on flood watch. Water levels are rising in the Crowsnest Pass area, and all the way east to Medicine Hat and as far south as the Blood Reserve and north to Claresholm. The worst of the flooding is on the Blood Reserve, where several hundred people have been forced from their homes. Oscar Cotton is the fire chief for the Blood Tribe. He says that nearly a hundred homes have been affected by the rising water. Cotton says there is damage but it is certainly not the worst flooding that's been seen in the area.	0:10
Story 2	A city council committee is backing a diversion tunnel to protect Calgary from flooding on the Elbow River. The city's flood mitigation panel says a tunnel below Heritage Drive could divert excess water from the Glenmore Reservoir. The head of the panel, Wolf Keller, says the tunnel could cost up to 500-million dollars, but it could save more than that if there's another flood.	0:53
Story 3	The University of Calgary's Medical School is getting a huge donation and a name change. Hundreds of people were at the Foothills Campus at the University of Calgary for the historic announcement. A 100 million dollar donation was received from local businessman and U of C alumnus Geoffrey Cumming. It didn't end there - after Cumming's donation Alberta Premier Dave Hancock announced a matching donation from the government of Alberta. Hancock said, "This combined gift of 200 million dollars, I think, is one of largest research gifts in Canadian history." And the faculty of medicine is now called the Cumming School of Medicine.	01:28

Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary:

Answer	Words in the story	Related words
c	flood	a) boss leader
g	watch	b) growing increasing
b	rising	c) large quantity lots of water
e	certainly	d) harm destruction
f	forced	e) for sure definitely
a	chief	f) mandatory have to
h	affected	g) guard attention
d	damage	h) touched concerned

Listening Activity: True/False

1. **F** All of Alberta is on flood watch.
2. **F** Water levels might rise in the Crowsnest Pass area and Medicine Hat.
3. **T** The water levels are the highest on the Blood reserve.
4. **T** More than a hundred people have been forced from their homes.
5. **T** There is damage already caused by the rising water levels.
6. **F** This is the worst flooding that's been seen in the area.

News story 2

Vocabulary:

1. Go through the **tunnel** and then turn left once you're out of it and you will find the lake.
2. Just put any **excess** food left over from the picnic in the kitchen.
3. The **city council committee** has to decide what the best plan of action is for Calgary.
4. They **backed** the proposal to build a new tunnel under the road.
5. The council wants to **protect** the city from experiencing another flood this spring.
6. The focus is on the **mitigation** of any more damage from having another flood.
7. We can **divert** the water and send it away from the city, instead of through the city.

Listening:

1. What is the idea that is being put forward for city council to consider? The building of a diversion tunnel.
2. If there were a flood, where would it likely occur? On the Elbow River
3. Where would the tunnel begin? Glenmore Reservoir
4. Why is Wolf Keller commenting on the tunnel? He is the head of the mitigation panel, so he must be the spokesperson for this subject with the media.
5. Why could building the tunnel end up saving more than 500 million dollars? Because, if there were a flood, the damage caused by it would cost more than 500 million dollars.
6. How would the tunnel work? It would take the water from the reservoir and lead it away from the city and dump it somewhere else.

News story 3

Vocabulary:

Answer	Words or phrases	Definition
c	1. Donation (n)	a) An important or official statement
f	2. Historic (adj)	b) former student of a school or university
a	3. Announcement (n)	c) A gift of money or goods
g	4. Local (adj)	d) To make the same
b	5. Alumnus (n)	e) A sum or total of something added together
d	6. Match (v)	f) Very important and will be recorded as part of history
e	7. Combined (adj)	g) Referring to a certain area; it is nearby, not far away

Listening:

1. **_3_** The Alberta government decided to match the donation of Cumming's.
2. **_6_** The University has changed the name of the faculty of medicine.
3. **_2_** Cummings told the university that he will donate 100 million dollars.
4. **_5_** David Hancock make announcement about the government matching the donation.
5. **_4_** Hundreds of people were at the University for a historic announcement.
6. **_1_** Geoffrey Cummings decided to donate a lot of money to the University of Calgary.

Language focus: Using Simple Present Tense

1. Parts of Alberta **are** on flood watch.

Rewrite: They **are** on flood watch.

2. Oscar Cotton **is** the fire chief for the Blood Tribe.

Rewrite: He **is** the fire chief for the Blood Tribe

3. He **says** that nearly a hundred homes have been affected by the rising water.

Rewrite: Cotton **says** that nearly a hundred homes have been affected by the rising water.

4. Cotton **says** there **is** damage but it **is** certainly not the worst flooding that's been seen in the area.

Rewrite: He **says** the area **is** damaged but the rising water **is** certainly not the worst flooding that's been seen in the area.

5. The head of the panel, Wolf Keller, **says** the tunnel **could cost** up to 500-million dollars, but it **could save** more than that if there's another flood.

Rewrite: He **says** it **could cost** up to 500-million dollars, but building the tunnel **could save** more than that if the area **has** another flood.